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PROGRAM IN THE PREPARATION OF COLLEGE GRADUATES TO TEACH IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS IN URBAN DISADVANTAGED AREAS.

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TO HELP COLLEGE GRADUATES WITH NO PREVIOUS PREPARATION FOR TEACHING TO QUALIFY AS TEACHERS IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS IN DEPRESSED AREAS OF NEW YORK CITY, THIRTY TO FORTY STUDENTS ARE ADMITTED EACH YEAR TO A NEW TWO-STAGE, 48-CREDIT, GRADUATE PROGRAM OF TRAINING LEADING TO THE M.S. IN EDUCATION. STUDENTS ARE SELECTED ON THE BASIS OF ACADEMIC QUALIFICATIONS, LIFE-EXPERIENCE OR VOCATIONAL SKILLS AND AN EXPRESSED COMMITMENT TO TEACHING DISADVANTAGED CHILDREN. TRAINING CONSISTS OF (1) TWO SEMESTERS AND A SUMMER OF FULL-TIME STUDY LEADING TO A PROVISIONAL CERTIFICATE AND PAID EMPLOYMENT AS A TEACHER AND (2) CONTINUATION OF GRADUATE STUDY ON A PART-TIME BASIS LEADING TO PERMANENT CERTIFICATION AND THE MASTER'S DEGREE. THE PROGRAM ALSO (3) PROVIDES ON-THE-JOB ASSISTANCE TO THE BEGINNING TEACHER DURING HIS FIRST YEAR OF SERVICE, (4) SHIFTS THE LOCALE OF TRAINING FROM THE COLLEGE CLASSROOM TO THE COMMUNITY AND THE DISADVANTAGED SCHOOL, AND (5) ADJUSTS THE TRAINEES' SUBJECT MATTER SO THAT IT DIRECTLY AIDS IN THE TEACHING OF THE DISADVANTAGED. AMONG THE PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED HAVE BEEN (1) TRAINEE SELECTION (NOT ALL THE TRAINNEES COULD LEARN TO WORK EFFECTIVELY WITH THE DISADVANTAGED), (2) THE INSENSITIVITY OF SOME PUBLIC SCHOOL PERSONNEL AND COLLEGE INSTRUCTORS TO PROBLEMS OF THE DISADVANTAGED, (3) HIGHLY REGIMENTED, HIGH-CONFLICT SCHOOLS, AND (4) CONTENT AND TIMING OF TRAINING EXPERIENCES. (AW)

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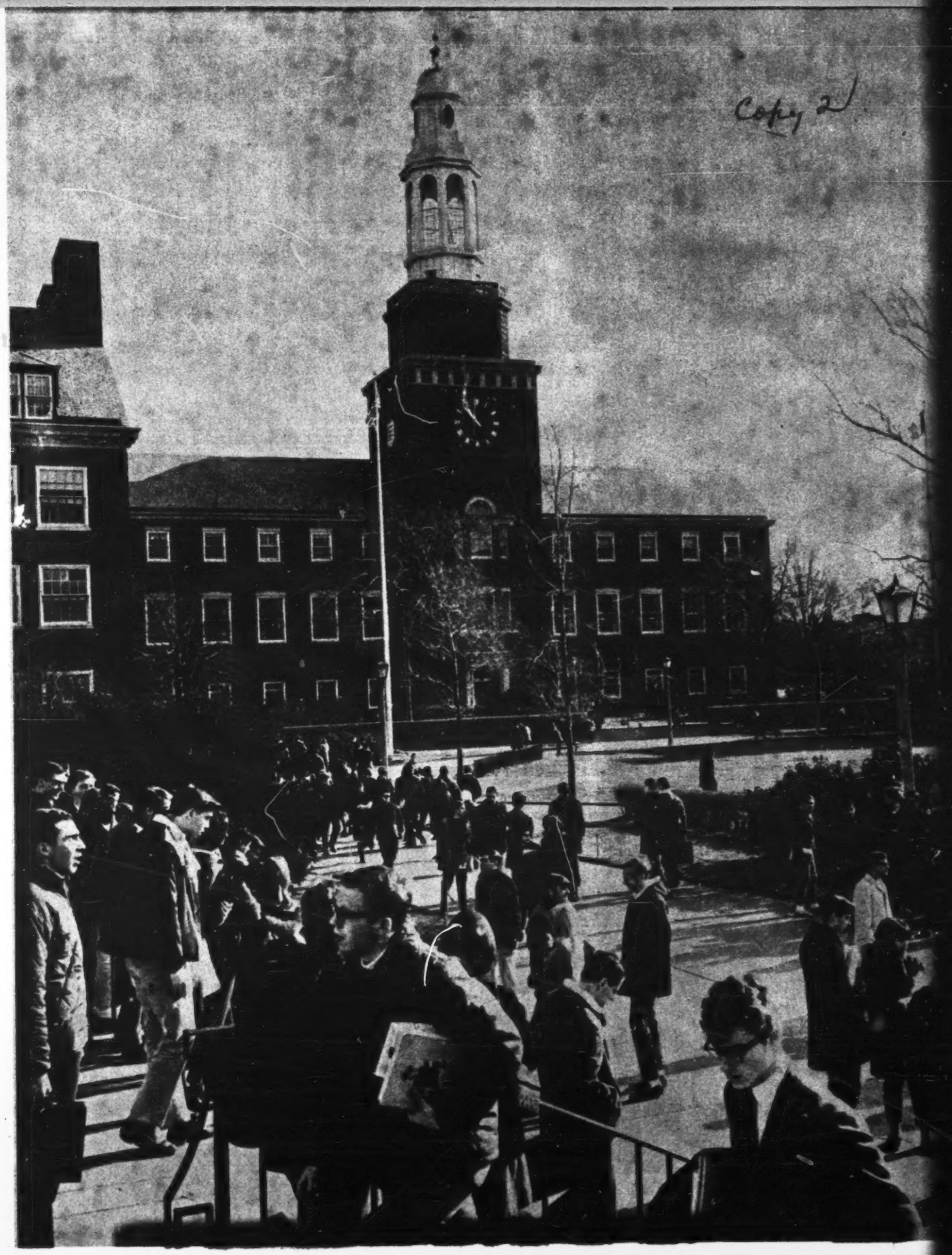

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THE PREPARATION OF COLLEGE GRADUATES TO TEACH IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS IN URBAN DISADVANTAGED AREAS

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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION

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PROGRAM

IN

THE PREPARATION OF COLLEGE GRADUATES

TO TEACH IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

IN

URBAN DISADVANTAGED AREAS

Submitted to the
AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF COLLEGES FOR TEACHER EDUCATION
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SUMMARY STATEMENT

The program was specifically designed for mature men and women, college-educated but without previous foundation for teaching, who now wish to turn to a career in teaching, and particularly are interested in working with disadvantaged children in inner-city schools. Experimental in approach and in much of its substance and modes of training, the program also serves as a laboratory whose lessons of experience may be applied to a broader range of teacher-education activities at Brooklyn College. Two years in the making, the program was introduced in the summer of 1965, and is now past the middle of its second year of operation.

Thirty to forty students are admitted each year, and become matriculated in a special 48-credit graduate program of training leading to the M. S. in Education. Students are selected on the basis of academic qualifications, life-experience or vocational skills which can be a useful adjunct to teaching, and expressed commitment to teaching disadvantaged children. This commitment is tested in field performance before students are allowed to enter the internship period. About 40 per cent of the students admitted in the first two in-take groups were men; there was a broad range of socio-economic background, and all major ethnic groups were represented.

Training proceeds in two stages, without interruption. The first stage consists of a summer and two subsequent semesters of full-time study leading to provisional certification or licensing and paid employment as a teacher; the second is a continuation of graduate study on a part-time basis leading to permanent certification and the attainment of the Master's degree. A feature of the program is that the College provides individual help to the beginning teacher during his first year of service.

The principal locale of training is the community and the school; college courses, in the form of seminars, are collateral. Moreover, the college courses are arranged in new subject-matter syntheses aiming directly at teaching disadvantaged children. The training staff are community agency supervisors, school supervisors and teachers, and college faculty members. The first stage of training consists of a summer's community work, a semester of pre-internship school experience, and a semester of internship, each field experience supplemented by appropriate collateral seminars. The remaining work leading to the degree is organized, as far as possible, around the needs and capabilities of each student as a beginning teacher.

Apart from more formal features of evaluation, which are prescribed, the program is under constant scrutiny and study by all participants. Plans for the third year of operation include important modifications and adjustments.

PROGRAM IN THE PREPARATION OF COLLEGE GRADUATES TO TEACH IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS IN URBAN DISADVANTAGED AREAS

ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT

In the Spring of 1963 a group of colleagues from the Department of Education, under the chairmanship of Professor Joseph Justman, Director of Teacher Education, met in a series of sessions whose intended outcome was the preparation of a program specifically designed for teachers of disadvantaged children in inner-city schools. Concerned with the patent shortcomings of these children's education in schools, and aware of the limitations of hastily improvised or adapted programs of teacher education, the group determined to begin "from scratch," neither borrowing nor adapting from offerings existent at Brooklyn College or known to be elsewhere.

Exploring the problem - its opportunities and resources for help as well as its difficulties - the group (gradually enlarging as faculty interest spread) formulated hypotheses on premises which might serve as guideposts for a new program. In all, 16 such premises were developed, of which the following are illustrative:

1. It would be helpful to draw into the teaching profession more persons of minority-group or lower-income background, particularly as teachers of disadvantaged children.

2. College graduates in their middle years, without previous preparation for teaching, may harbor or develop an interest in a teaching career; and such people can bring to the profession added skills gained from vocational or life experience, as well as a commit-

ment to working with disadvantaged children.

3. The community and its schools, rather than the college classroom, could serve as the principal locale for training such teachers; field experiences could be the principal component in educating teachers of the disadvantaged, college courses the collateral component.

4. College offerings in teacher education could themselves be recast in new syntheses of subject matter, better adapted to the capabilities of adult students and to the instructional needs of disadvantaged children.

5. Training might be conducted through the pooled resources of community and school personnel working in conjunction with college teachers, rather than through the latter alone.

As the work proceeded along these lines, the entire Department of Education (then numbering some 150) joined in. Soon a proposal for a special graduate program for preparing teachers of disadvantaged children was developed, approved by the Department, forwarded to the appropriate college curriculum authorities, then to the entire Faculty Council. Approved by the Faculty Council, the program was then adopted by the Board of Higher Education. In the summer of 1965, it became operative.

PRINCIPAL OBJECTIVES

These are:

1. To help mature men and women, college graduates but without previous preparation for teaching, to qualify as teachers in public elementary schools in depressed areas of New York City, as rapidly as is consistent with the attainment of competence for service as beginning teachers.

2. To enable these beginning teachers to grow in professional competence through (a) on-the-job support and assistance, extended through the first year of service, and (b) uninterrupted continuation of graduate study culminating in the Master's degree.

3. To explore and try out new modes of teacher education addressed to the capabilities of adult students with a commitment to teaching, and designed to strengthen and improve the instruction of disadvantaged children.

4. To assess, review, and modify the training program with a view toward extending its lessons of experience to the broader range of teacher-education activities at Brooklyn College and, if possible, to the profession as a whole. (The program is to fulfill a laboratory function. Truly a "pilot" project, its immediate goal is subordinate to the longer-range end of learning how to teach disadvantaged children).

SCOPE AND DESIGN

A small number of students (30 to 40, if that many can be obtained) are admitted into the program yearly following a careful selection process, and become matriculated in a special graduate 48-credit program leading to the degree of Master of Science in Education. The first 18 credits are on a tuition-fee basis, the remaining 30 tuition free. The first year of study requires full-time attendance over a summer and two regular semesters; thereafter students may continue in part-time attendance until the requirements for the degree are completed. By the end of the first year, the student qualifies for a provisional teaching certificate or license and for paid full-time employment as a teacher. In-service help by the College is provided during the first year of employment, and there is no interruption of study leading to permanent certification.

The first 18 credits of study may be called the basic sequence. This

sequence consists of a summer's work experience in a community agency, under supervision and with concurrent college study; one semester (Fall) of pre-internship school experience, with three concurrent college courses; and a semester (Spring) of paid school internship, with collateral college courses. All the field supervision is done jointly by community, school, and college personnel.

The remaining 30 credits of graduate study follow the pattern of the regular M.S. in Education for elementary teachers, except that students in this program may choose under advisement special courses supportive of strength or corrective of shortcomings. Thus, one student may elect specialized workshops in art, music, language arts, science, or mathematics education; another student may be drawn to the special concentration for teaching Spanish-speaking children. The total 48-credit pattern of study is fitted, so far as possible, to the student. To obtain the degree, all must pass a comprehensive examination.

ADMISSION

Students in the program undergo rigorous selection, and are further evaluated several times during their training period. The aim is to find men and women with interest in and a commitment to teaching disadvantaged children who, moreover, can bring to their work in the classroom special skills gained from vocational and life experience, and who, under trial, can retain their enthusiasm for teaching under sometimes difficult school circumstances. That they are proficient in scholarship can be ascertained through their college records; that professional devotion remains staunch can only be determined by repeated assessment of their work in the field.

Following a review of college and employment records (including three letters of recommendation), each promising candidate is interviewed by a

panel of three persons, two faculty members (one outside the program) and a cooperating principal of a depressed-area school, all working with prepared interview guidelines and rating schedules. (See the supporting documents). Successful applicants are then admitted to the program, but in the course of the basic sequence and prior to entrance into internship are again evaluated. Those whose interest seems to be diminishing or who are unable to meet their assigned responsibilities are advised to leave the program.

Of 30 students admitted in the 1965 group, 25 remained as interns. The 1966 group admitted during the regular in-take period was smaller (18). It was then decided to open admission again for the Spring semester, this time with an additional intake of 20, bringing the total admitted group for the academic year to 38.

A profile of the students reveals features of interest. The range in age is from 25 to 55 years. About 40 per cent of the group are men. In ethnic composition they form a cross-section of the city's population - white, Negro, Puerto Rican, Chinese. Economic backgrounds extend from the relatively well-to-do to the very poor. Their colleges range from Ivy League to small Negro institutions in the South. Previous work experience includes Peace Corps service, military service, religious work, social work, business and the professions; there is a young stock broker, a Certified Public Accountant, a chemist, a musician, and a doctor's wife. What they have in common is ability, a strong social conscience, and a compassion for poor and deprived children.

COMMUNITY AND SCHOOL EXPERIENCE

Summer Session. As their first experience, students are placed in paid or unpaid positions of responsible community service, affording them contact

with disadvantaged children in their own out-of-school locale, and familiarizing them with problems of home and community life. A minimum total of 75 hours of field service is required, extended over six weeks, with a collateral college seminar meeting three evenings a week. Students work under the joint supervision of community and college personnel. Needless to say, placement is invariably with agencies operating in the most depressed communities, and the students' induction into the program is venturesome and exciting.

Cooperating agencies include the Police Athletic League, Youth House, neighborhood settlement houses, and organized civic action groups. In the summer of 1965, students working with JOIN in the Bedford-Stuyvesant section of Brooklyn helped to issue the first neighborhood newspaper. (Copies are included with the supporting documents).

Fall Semester. The semester is devoted to familiarization with a disadvantaged school and its problems, prior to entrance into internship. Although students engage in observation of teaching and may do some practice teaching, the emphasis is on study of the whole school, and particularly on human relations within and on interrelations with the community. Students may (when appropriate) attend conferences with parents, join in PTA activities, observe the work of psychologists, guidance counselors, remedial reading specialists, and attendance officers, and confer with school officials. Their work schedule is prepared by the school principal and his associates, with help from a visiting faculty member who provides linkage with the college program and assists in the assessment of students. A minimum of 120 hours of school experience is required, spread over 15 weeks, along with enrollment in three collateral seminars (described below). Again, placement is in "difficult" schools in disadvantaged neighborhoods.

Spring Semester. Following evaluation, qualified students are admitted to a semester of internship. Two interns are placed in one classroom, each on half-salary from the Board of Education. Supervision is intensive and coordinated, provided by experienced teachers, the school principal, and college visitors, working as a team. Every student is carefully observed from the outset, especially during the early weeks, in order to anticipate and to obviate difficulties the student is not prepared to deal with.

In several instances students have been moved to classes where conditions were less trying, and have responded well. In general, the rigorous pre-internship conditioning has brought good results in that students are enabled to make rapid strides toward assumption of independent classroom responsibility and in their care and concern for the children.

Collaterally the students attend college seminars (described below).

Assistance in the Job. This begins with the students' placement in teaching positions and continues for a year. Faculty members visit the teachers regularly for observation and site conferences, and are at all times available for consultation. Beginning teachers participate in bi-weekly colloquia for all students in the program, are assisted with teaching materials, audio-visual aids, tests, and demonstration lessons, and have for their use the very considerable specialist resources of the College.

COURSE INSTRUCTION

The collateral courses of instruction are not only joined with the corresponding community or school experiences, but are also inter-related to form a coherent pattern of training. They are scheduled and conducted as seminars, with teams of specialists alternating in a leading role in

their respective areas of strength.

The seminars are not modelled upon any existing courses but are so constituted as to focus throughout on the disadvantaged child - his social milieu, personal development, and instructional needs as he progresses through the school. In general, there is an attempt to provide a cognitive base and an intellectual extension of the students' concurrent field experience. The offerings are frankly experimental and tentative, subject to constant modification in the light of growing experience and knowledge. This effort to avoid crystallization will continue for some years.

The seminar in Psychology and Sociology of Urban Youth, which accompanies the Summer experience in community service, examines the developmental tasks, interests, and aptitudes of children growing up in disadvantaged areas in relation to the social forces about them. There are demographic studies of the community, its resources, pressures, social organizations, and particularly those influences which have a telling effect on children's behavior. Selected readings and discussions attempt to give meaning to the students' ongoing work with children.

Paralleling the Fall semester's pre-internship school experience are two seminars and a workshop. Psychology of Learning in Curriculum Development attempts to tie in learning theory and research as related to disadvantaged children to their practical applications in program development and school practice. A second seminar focuses on reading and language problems in the school, and on a meaningful content in social studies, drawing from the students' school observation and extending it toward a critical formulation of teaching method. The workshop dwells on problems of human relations in the school and community, deviations in behavior, and constructive classroom management. The workshop is conducted by a particularly able school principal from the Bedford-Stuyvesant district of Brooklyn.

The Spring semester's internship is accompanied by the continuation of the seminar on learning and the workshop in human relations, with the addition of a seminar in teaching science, mathematics, and the arts. Here, particularly, an effort is made to draw upon materials and instructional methods suitable to disadvantaged learners, and much use is made of experimental courses of study. In each of the courses ample room is made for discussion of the problems encountered in daily classroom practice.

TEACHING AND SUPERVISORY STAFFS

Each of the directors of the community agencies to which students are assigned serves as a field supervisor, paired with a colleague from the college faculty. Some 15 selected school principals heading schools in disadvantaged districts, who, from the outset, have cooperated in the development of the program, continue to provide supervisory support for pre-interns and interns and to collaborate with members of the college faculty on both field and course problems. To facilitate such consultation a luncheon conference with the cooperating school principals is arranged each semester.

The College teaching and supervisory staff is headed by Professor Charles M. Long who was appointed specifically to this post after many years of experience in developing in-service programs for teachers of the disadvantaged, including one of the first institutes on school integration which brought together Negro and white teachers from southern schools. Professor Richard Trent, who heads the seminar in learning and curriculum development, is a research psychologist who has studied children with adjustment problems in schools and correctional institutions in New York, Puerto Rico, and Ghana. Mrs. Henrietta Purcell, who conducts the workshop in human relations, is principal of a Bedford-Stuyvesant school. Mrs. Zelda Wirtschafter and Mrs. Ethyl Haber, who work with Dr. Long in the two seminars on instruction, have dis-

tinguished records as teachers in schools in Manhattan's East Side and in East Harlem. In this second year of the program Miss Felice Bernstein, a psychologist, and Mrs. Clementene Wheeler, a specialist in higher education, have been added to the program.

BUDGET

Although students are charged a modest tuition fee for the first 18 credits of study, the program is principally supported by the College Budget to the extent of some $40,000 in the first year, $50,000 in the current year. With the third intake group scheduled for 1967, it is estimated that the cost (including the tuition-free students in the remaining 30 credits of the program) will mount to some $75,000.

Having attracted favorable attention from the New York State Education Department, the program received a subsidy of some $12,000 in 1965, and $20,000 in 1966 to defray the tuition fees of students, most of whom were family men and women in financial need. This remains the most pressing financial problem in the program, inasmuch as the College is authorized by law to provide graduate teacher education tuition-free only to the extent of 30 credits.

WHAT WE ARE LEARNING FROM OUR EXPERIENCE

After a year and a half of operation and continuous close assessment, the program seems in good order. Certain features are being reconstituted, but others are clearly successful:

1. We are satisfied that the practice of providing on-the-job assistance during the first year of teaching is essential, since this is most critical in retaining teachers in the profession.
2. The principle of affording students field training tasks

of graduated responsibility, from community experience to school observation and participation, through internship, to a first year of teaching with continuing consultation, is proving sound.

3. The shift in the principal locus of training from college classrooms to disadvantaged neighborhood agencies and schools - with resultant involvement of school and community people in the training process - is one of the most important contributions of the program and will be enhanced.
4. Experimentation continues with course content. The faculty is persuaded that we are correct in placing primary emphasis on practical, school-centered methods of teaching directed at the specific school population (including realistic methods of dealing with deviant behavior). At the same time, we believe we must continue to offer thorough grounding in developmental psychology, learning theory, and curriculum procedure - in the interest of the students' future professional growth.

On the other hand, some aspects of the original plan have presented problems in operation, and are being dealt with:

1. The standards for selection of participants and their periodic evaluation are becoming more exacting, since the first group of candidates revealed that not all interested people can learn to work effectively with severely disadvantaged children. For some, the daily involvement with children of sharply different backgrounds and unpredictable reactions may border on the traumatic. Others evidence latent feelings of prejudice which they may or may not recognize, and

the training experience may not be able to overcome.

2. Some public school people (as, of course, some faculty) are not sufficiently sensitive to the problems of the disadvantaged, and consequently are less well equipped than others to undertake supervision of teachers-in-preparation for these schools.

3. Some school situations are so regimented or involved in conflict that they do not offer good opportunities for learning by student teachers. More critical attention, therefore, is being given to the selection, among severely deprived schools, of those offering the best school and internship experience.

4. After evaluating the first-year student group, the teaching and supervisory staff has instituted changes in the classroom-experience portion of the pre-internship semester. Instead of relying on a "master" teacher to afford the needed range of experience, the group has designed a series of observations and specific learning tasks that will assure effective practice in planning, presenting, and evaluating lessons in language arts in two "problem" classroom settings. Principals of cooperating schools are involved in planning, and will follow through as supervisors. The revised plan necessitates a substantial increase above the 120 hours in school originally prescribed.

5. Another change in programming involves the timing of the internship. In the first year, students entered the program in the summer with assigned experience

> in a deprived neighborhood, began student teaching in the Fall, and in the Spring term took over depressed-area classes as interns. The internships proved to be exceedingly difficult, since every class had for one reason or another been abandoned by its original teacher in mid-year, and problems had crystallized. The program now envisages a time sequence starting in the Spring semester, so as to begin internship with newly organized classes in the Fall.

An irrefutable conclusion from our experience in the program is that there is a shortage of trustworthy, verified, hard knowledge in the field of educating the disadvantaged. The same inadequacy exists in sociology and psychology. We are faced with the necessity of moving ahead empirically, and we believe this to be a defensible way to begin, provided we are not content to end with empirical answers.

The program incorporates mechanisms for evaluation of the effectiveness of the training process. We shall compile our findings and share them, both through publication and by continuing a series of conferences, begun in the Fall of 1964, with the interest of furthering the exchange of ideas among those concerned with preparation of teachers for inner-city schools.